

The Olympics in Singapore



“You have, what we say in skating, a perfect six.”

**Jacques Rogge,
the International Olympic
Committee president,
giving the Republic full
marks for its organisation
of the 117th IOC Session**

Fireworks at the Esplanade to celebrate the opening of the 117th IOC Session.

Her job was to hand over an envelope. But this seemingly simple task was a nerve-racking experience for National Optimist sailor Griselda Khng, 13.

The reason: the envelope in question was no ordinary one. It delivered the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) verdict on which of the two final candidate cities – London and Paris – will host the Olympics 2012 Summer Games.

An estimated one billion eager viewers around the world were tuned into the live show.

So the nervousness wasn't experienced only by Griselda. Citizens and

supporters of the London and Paris camps around the world were equally, if not more, anxious than Griselda as they awaited the final moment.

Finally, the intense suspense ended as IOC president Jacques Rogge read out what was in that envelope.

London emerged the winner and host city of the 2012 Olympics, defeating hot favourite Paris in the final round of voting with 54 votes to 50.

As London rejoiced in its victory, Singapore also celebrated the success of the 117th IOC Session.

With five major cities – London, Madrid, Moscow, New York and Paris – racing for the opportunity to host Olympics 2012, this IOC meeting was unprecedented in terms of the quality of delegates.

Political dignitaries included French President Jacques Chirac, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Spanish Premier Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero. From the field of sports came luminaries such as Sebastian Coe, David Beckham, Raul Gonzalez, Muhammad Ali and Laure Manaudou. This IOC Session was estimated to have attracted over 3,000 visitors, and 1,500 media representatives from around the world.

It was the first time in the history of Singapore sports that a meeting at this highest level of sports administrators was held here, and it was clearly the next best thing to hosting the Olympics itself for Singapore.

Centre stage for this mega-event was the Raffles City Convention Centre. But all area downtown Singapore plus other iconic venues such as Changi Airport were also dressed for the occasion.

An elaborate opening ceremony added some razzmatazz.

“One Voice, One Rhythm, One World” musical extravaganza at the Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay was watched by an audience that included Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong,



Jacques Rogge preparing to announce the 2012 Games host, after opening the envelope handed by Singapore sailor Griselda Khng (left). After the announcement of IOC, Londoners cheered as the city of London won the vote to host the next Olympic in 2012.

members of the IOC Committee and delegates from the bidding cities.

For 45 minutes, 300 Singaporean performers pounded drums, executed martial arts and crooned local Malay, Chinese, Indian and contemporary renditions to woo the 1,700-strong crowd.

Simon Clegg, chief executive of the British Olympic Association, said of the show: "It was fantastic that everyone was clapping at the end."

How the bid was won

It was in November 2002 in Mexico that Singapore won the bid to host the 117th IOC Session. The contest to become host city was no less gruelling than the bid to host the Olympics itself. With a difference of eight votes (59 against 51), Singapore edged out Guatemala City at the time to win the favour of IOC members with a detailed plan and colourful portrait of the city-state.

It was a rare opportunity for Singapore to showcase itself as an ideal city for international sports meetings and sporting events, as well as a unique tourist destination. The Session also gave a boost to the sports industry in Singapore.



(From left) British footballer David Beckham, Olympic rowing champion Steve Redgrave, heptathlon Olympian Denise Lewis, Olympic and world champion rower Matthew Pinsent, double Olympic gold medalist Shirley Robertson and Jonathan Edwards, also an Olympic gold medalist, at the London IOC delegation press conference at Carlton Hotel.



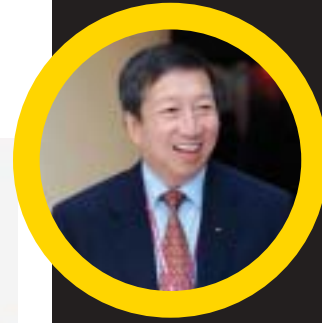
(From left) Ng Ser Miang, Jacques Rogge, Singapore Ministers Vivian Balakrishnan and Teo Chee Hean share a toast to the success of the 117th IOC Session.

"I could see that we would have tremendous logistical support in Singapore and we'd also have the advantage of it being a very natural meeting place for Chinese culture, Indian culture and Western culture."

Tony Hollingsworth, chief executive of Tribute, a London-based event production company

"Singapore has been a pleasure and a great experience. The people are wonderful, the food is great and it is cosmopolitan and diverse like New York. I'll be bringing home plenty of chilli sauce. And if I could, I would bring the hawker centre to New York as well."

Rich Dziepak, Singapore coordinator for New York's bid



Ng Ser Miang, Vice-President of the Singapore National Olympic Council at the 117th IOC Session.

Singapore on the IOC Board

Ng Ser Miang, 56, was elected to the International Olympic Council Executive Board during the 117th IOC Session held in Singapore. Mr Ng is the only IOC member from Singapore and the first Southeast Asian to be a member of the IOC. The Executive Board has 15 members, including the IOC President, and acts as the IOC's primary decision-making body.

Mr Ng was the President of the 117th IOC Session Singapore Organising Committee. He was commended for the successful staging of the session, which saw keen competition from among five of the world's best cities for the staging of the 2012 Olympics. Mr Ng hopes the success of the Session will bring the IOC to Singapore again in 2009, when the IOC is scheduled to hold its Congress.

A prominent Singaporean, Mr Ng is managing director of TIBS Holdings, which owns the Trans-Island Bus Services, and an independent director on several other companies listed on the Singapore Stock Exchange. He is also Singapore's non-resident Ambassador to Hungary and Norway.

A former Chairman of the Singapore Sports Council for 11 years, from 1991 to 2002, Mr Ng is now a member of the Committee on Sporting Singapore (CoSS) and Chairman of its Sub-Committee on Developing the Sports Industry. Mr Ng is optimistic that the successful conclusion of the 117th IOC Session has created opportunities for Singapore to host more international sports events and conventions.